

Sound walls likely on I-15

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By John Wright

Standard-Examiner staff

FARR WEST -- Bob Dabling lives 150 feet from the southbound on-ramp to Interstate 15 at 2700 North.

So when he recently realized not enough property owners in his area had expressed support for constructing a sound wall along the interstate, he sprang into action.

Dabling spent Monday and Tuesday going door to door and gathering 51 additional votes in favor of a sound wall -- enough to meet the Utah Department of Transportation's requirement of two-thirds support among property owners.

The effort came just in time for UDOT to amend its plans for an I-15 expansion slated to begin next year.

"We hotfooted it around here and got the names," Dabling said Wednesday. "That noise situation is terrible. If anybody doesn't believe we need that sound wall, I invite them to come out and spend 24 hours in my house."

The section of I-15 where Dabling lives, west of I-15 from south of the Willard Canal to north of 2700 North, is one of three where sound walls likely will be constructed as part of the I-15 expansion, said UDOT Region 1 spokesman Andy Neff.

The other two areas are east of I-15 between Riverdale Road and 31st Street in Riverdale and east of I-15 from north of the Willard Canal to Farr West Drive in Farr West.

Final numbers were not available Tuesday for the area west of I-15 in Farr West, but like Dabling, Neff said he is confident more than two-thirds of property owners voted in favor of a sound wall.

In the area east of I-15 in Farr West, Neff said 85 percent of property owners voted in favor of a sound wall. Resident Mike Wayment helped gather votes in that area, Neff said, and it marked only the second time in five years he has seen residents get involved in sound wall surveying, which UDOT normally conducts on its own.

Wayment could not be reached for comment.

"Both of those residents were instrumental in helping us complete the survey and get the required votes we needed for the sound wall," Neff said.

In the area east of I-15 in Riverdale, Neff said 69 percent of property owners voted in favor of a sound wall when surveyed by UDOT.

The agency now must obtain resolutions from the Riverdale and Farr West city councils before the sound walls can be added to its plans, Neff said.

"They typically go with the voice of the people," he said of city officials.

From 2006 to 2008, UDOT will spend \$180 million to reconstruct interchanges at 31st Street, 24th Street, 21st Street and 12th Street, and to widen I-15 to four lanes in each direction between Interstate 84 and 12th Street.

An environmental impact study identified five sections of I-15 that have or will have sufficient noise to be eligible for sound walls as part of the capacity-increasing expansion.

Not enough residents voted in favor of sound walls in the other two eligible areas -- on the west side of I-15 from 31st Street to 21st Street in Ogden, and on the east side of I-15 south of 24th Street in Ogden.

In the area west of I-15 in Ogden, 27 percent of property owners voted in favor of a sound wall, Neff said. In the area east of I-15 in Ogden, 34 percent of property owners voted in favor of a sound wall.